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STANFORD UNIVERSITY SCHOOL OF MEDICINE
Department of Genetics

March 5, 1973

Mr. Leonide Moguy,
General representative
Mouvement Universel pour une Federation Mondiale
3, avenue Paul Doumer
PARIS XVI° FRANCE

Dear Mr. Moguy,

Thank you for your letter of January 18th. I share with you the aspirations of the World Federalists Movement and I admire the dedication and creative spirit that go into a film like "One World or no World".

If I must at this point still decline your very kind invitation to join in the Committee of Patrons, it is conceivably because of a misunderstanding on my part about the actual message of the film; in any case it would be easy to mistake the reasons for my response and I hope you will be able to hear them, and if possible even to clear up my confusion.

My concern is about the theme "all that it needs is the will". This was an ideal that was in fact historically tested during the period between 1920 and 1938. Its consequences, so far from the intentions of its idealistic proponents, were the actual encouragement of the Hitlerian conspiracy with consequences for humanity upon which I need not enlarge.

The world situation today is if anything more complex; and I do not mean to suggest a strict comparison with the problem of Nazi expansionism. Nevertheless, I fear that a reliance upon a pious motto like "all that it needs is the will" may actually detract from the complex and demanding labor which will be necessary to solve a large number of very difficult and very particular problems. "The will", and the perception that we must "unite or perish" are without doubt necessary conditions for world survival. However, the theme "all that it needs is the will" would also seem to imply that these are sufficient conditions and I regret to have to say that untold mischief might be the consequence of such an approach. You may be able to instruct me how good will alone could solve the problems of economic development and social reform in the poor countries, a condition which is indeed a necessary factor for world stability. You may be able to tell me how good will could solve the problem of coping with fanatical terrorists and with the competing and just but mutually contradictory claims for ethnic and national expression that have caused so much misery in Africa and in South Asia and seriously threatened world stability in the Middle East.

Alternatively you may be able to tell me that I have misunderstood the actual message of the film and then in a fashion which would facilitate my adhering to it in a public way.

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Again, Mr. Moguy, please understand that I do not intend this as a criticism of your artistic objectives and I am still able to offer you my private congratulations for these efforts despite your responses to my concerns. Nevertheless, I felt it necessary to raise these questions as a precondition for my own public adherence to the theme or I would find myself in an awkward and logically untenable position with regard to other public policy statements.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Joshua Lederberg". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Joshua" being more prominent and the last name "Lederberg" written in a more compact, flowing style.

Joshua Lederberg
Professor of Genetics

JL/rr